

World Baseball Classic Championship Final - Venezuela vs USA

Tuesday, 17 March, 2026

Miami, Florida, USA

LoanDepot Park

Team USA

Manager Mark DeRosa

Postgame Press Conference

Venezuela 3, USA 2

Q. Mark, second time second place. 2029, 2030, you get the call again. What's your answer, and why?

MARK DeROSA: Oh, it would be 100 percent yes to do it again. I'd love to get over the finish line. Not only is it two times but 3-2 both times.

Why? If you saw how hurting the guys are in that locker room, you'd know why. For some reason, this WBC has become a tidal wave of emotion for a lot of guys. You get them in the room representing their country, coming together for two-and-a-half weeks, the buy-in. It's infectious in there.

So yes, a special group to be a part of. I'm proud of the way we represented U.S. A soft spot in my heart for Venezuela as well. I played there in winter ball. I know a lot of guys from there. And Omar's a great man, the manager over there. So yeah, just a great game.

Q. Mark, there have been six Classics now, and Team U.S. has won just once. What do you think that says about America's place in the game internationally and how the game has evolved?

MARK DeROSA: Yeah, I'm not going to make any excuses for us. I think at the end of the day everybody comes in with -- you know, it's early in spring training. Guys are getting ready for the season. Eventually I think the tournament gets moved and I think the guys are in better form pitching-wise.

But ultimately it's who gets hot at the right time, who gets a big swing. It just seemed like we couldn't get the offense going the entire tournament.



We came out of Arizona just absolutely smoking the ball in the two exhibition games we played, and for what whatever reason, we just couldn't get it rolling offensively. Even tonight, you look up in the seventh, and they had a two-hit shutout.

Hats off to them. For them to battle last night against Italy, for them to use their entire bullpen, those guys to come back out on no rest was pretty special to watch.

Q. Mark, you said before the game that Mason would be available if you needed him, and since there wasn't going to be a save situation once you got to the ninth, I was curious what went into not using him there.

MARK DeROSA: Honoring the Padres. Had we taken the lead, he was coming in, but I wasn't going to bring him in to a tie game.

Q. When you would never get the chance to get the lead again?

MARK DeROSA: What's that?

Q. It wasn't going to be a save situation at that point.

MARK DeROSA: I wanted to honor the fact that there was a situation there where, if it was tied, we were going to use Whitlock. We had talked to the Red Sox about that. And if we had the lead, we were going to use Mason.

Q. You mentioned the emotion of the guys in the clubhouse. Do you think that will lead to other players wanting to play for Team USA in the future?

MARK DeROSA: I think everybody's at different stages in their career. You've got to get buy-in from the team, you've got to get buy-in from the player, you've got to get buy-in from the agent. I think there's a lot that goes into it from a pitching standpoint. They're building up, they're ramping up for a season.

I think everyone in their heart to a man wants to do it, it's just the timing of where they are at in their career.

Q. Mark, do you see any situation where you would



put Cal Raleigh into the game?

MARK DeROSA: I mean, we talked about a bunch of scenarios there. I got a ton of trust from for Will Smith. He's had monster moments. I mean, he hit a huge homer in Game 7 of the World Series to help the Dodgers win the World Series, so I felt comfortable with him catching tonight.

Q. Mark, you talked about the offense. You guys faced a couple of really tough bullpens in the semifinal and the final, but how surprised were you that your offense didn't produce a little bit more in these last two games?

MARK DeROSA: I mean, surprised because of the names at the back of the jersey, but not surprised because of where they're at in spring training.

Yeah, that's my answer. I really don't have a rhyme or reason to why. I just think you're either hot or not in a seven-game blast like this.

Q. Along those lines, going into the eighth inning you had four base runners, none had gone past first base. What made Rodriguez so tough tonight, and what made their Venezuelan middle relief so tough tonight?

MARK DeROSA: Yeah, I mean, Rodriguez has been a darn good pitcher in the league for a long time, right? Different variations of the heater, good changeup, kept the guys off balance, worked both corners, cutters, sinkers, four-seamers in to the righties. He's a good pitcher.

And just to be honest with you, watching the Italy game last night, he kind of ran through the same bullpen guys he ran last night, right? The Zerpas of the world, Bazarro. They've got good stuff. Bottom line, good stuff.

Q. So there's been a lot of talk about this tournament and if the U.S. public follows it and the importance of it. The difference is going to be, three years from now -- we have the Olympics now. Do you think what happened tonight will change the idea of putting Major Leaguers in the Olympics, and what would be the mindset of the U.S. going into the Olympics?

MARK DeROSA: Yeah, I think Major Leaguers would want to play in the Olympics and represent their country. I don't know what all of that goes into taking place, but certainly I know that those guys are hurting in there right now. Yeah, they wanted to get it done tonight. So yeah, I would assume that would be the case.

Q. Mark, how interesting was it for Team U.S. and for

you as a manager having faced two very aggressive teams such as the DR and Venezuela back to back, DR in the semifinal and Venezuela now in the final?

MARK DeROSA: I mean, just a ton of respect for both countries and their style of play. That Dominican game will be talked about for a long time. And then to battle with Venezuela, I mean, they are littered with Big Leaguers up and down their lineup.

This tournament just grows the game so much. It's so good for baseball, it really is. I mean, I said this in the pregame presser. When I played in it, lucky in 2009, I don't think that there was a guy in that room that really knew what we were getting involved with, right? Just trying to grow the game. This thing has just got massive legs on it. So yeah, just a phenomenal tournament all around.

Q. You got the chance to talk to each one of the guys when you received the medals. Especially can you say what you told Clayton Kershaw on that talk?

MARK DeROSA: I worked my butt off to put this team together with Mike Hill for over a year starting last March with Aaron Judge. So I just wanted to tell each and every one of them how thankful I was that they made the commitment, that they bought in, that they became a team super quick. It was just a special group of guys and one of the highlights of my professional career.

And as for Clayton, just thanked him for coming and being a part of it. What an amazing career. I just wanted to stand there because I knew how many phone calls throughout the year to kind of build the team out and how much it meant to me and how much it meant to the guys in there that I just wanted to stand there and hug them.

Q. Mark, if you could point to the main mistake the U.S. made tonight against Venezuela, what would it be for you?

MARK DeROSA: I don't think there was a mistake tonight. We just didn't put any pressure on them offensively. I think Nolan McLean pitched his tail off. We were not prepared for him to go five. We thought he'd give us three, he'd give us four, and we were going to go right to the bullpen and see where the game was at.

That's a testament to him. He had unbelievable stuff tonight, kind of matched Eddie. There was a passed ball there early, they got second and third. They were able to get a sac fly and just grab the lead, keep the fans involved.

I don't think it was a mistake on our end. We just never put any pressure on them.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Q. Mark, what's your vantage of the change in feeling in the dugout when Bryce hits the home run?

MARK DeROSA: Yeah, big moment.

Q. And second part of that, do you have any particular disappointment for him, because if you guys win, that HR might be remembered in an all-time sense?

MARK DeROSA: I've known Bryce for a long time. I was with the Nationals in 2012 when he was 19 years old when he was at big league camp and spent a lot of time with him. We have a lot of history, and I wanted him to be a part of this.

I knew he was going to have a moment. That's who he is, right? He has the ability to have big moments in big spots. He wants it. He wants to be up there in that spot.

Yeah, it hurts. We shared a special moment in my office after the game. We go back a long way. I've watched him grow up in the game. A lot of conversations. I knew what his career was kind of going to be like with the multiple MVPs and how he's competed. I was just proud he was a part of the team really just to get to spend two-and-a-half weeks, share a clubhouse with him again.

(FastScripts by ASAP Sports)